

Health Workforce Research Center (HWRC) Grant Opportunity FAQs

Areas of Concentration

Q: How were the areas of concentration selected for this particular Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)? Will additional FOAs appear in these same areas in the future?

A: The topics were selected in accordance with current Bureau of Health Professions (BHP) priorities as well as in accordance with areas where BHP believes there to be significant external expertise that could provide a benefit to the public. No additional FOAs are planned at this time.

Q: What does “flexible use of workers” mean?

A: Flexible use of workers is intended to address questions related to leveraging the existing health workforce to improve access to care, efficiency, and effectiveness in care delivery. Topic areas may include novel health care roles, team-based care (including the composition of teams and division of responsibilities across a team), professionals working at the top of their skills and training, delegation, etc. The specific topics and projects proposed within this category – including which professions to include or study – are at the discretion of the applicant. Applicants should justify the policy relevance and applicability of their choice of both projects and professions.

Q: Is the long-term care topic limited to long-term care for the elderly, or may it include long-term care for individuals with disabilities?

A: BHP imposes no limits on the definition of long-term care or the projects that an applicant may propose within the long-term care concentration. The specific topics/projects proposed within a concentration area are at the discretion of the applicant. Applicants should justify the policy relevance and applicability of their choice of both projects and professions.

Q: The FOA notes that the deputy principal investigator and core research staff for the project must have authored or co-authored at least five different articles on health workforce topics published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Do these publications have to be directly related to the area of concentration?

A: Applicants should include the publications they consider most relevant to the proposed work for the HWRC. Unpublished relevant work may be submitted as one demonstration of expertise; however, this work will not substitute for the publication requirement.

Eligibility

Q: I already receive grant funds from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for a related activity/program. Does this limit my eligibility to receive HWRC funds?

A: There is no default conflict of interest that arises from receiving more than one grant from HRSA; however, specific activities and projects may only be funded once. Therefore, there should be no overlap in the activities that are funded by the grant vehicles, no products that serve as deliverables

for both grants simultaneously, and no overlap that would indicate double payment for a single activity.

Q: The FOA notes that the Principal Investigator (PI), deputy PI, and core research staff for the project must have authored or co-authored at least five different articles on health workforce topics published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Do these have to be directly related to the area of concentration?

A: Applicants should include the publications they consider most relevant to the proposed work for the HWRC. Unpublished relevant work may be submitted as one demonstration of expertise; however, this work will not substitute for the publication requirement.

Q: This application seems related to the formerly HRSA-funded Regional Centers for Health Workforce Studies. Are these entities eligible to apply for this opportunity?

A: The Regional Centers for Health Workforce Studies are no longer funded by HRSA. If a former center meets the eligibility requirements of this opportunity and submits a complete application in accordance with the directions of the FOA, it will be considered for funding as part of the competitive pool along with all other applications.

Q: Are the formally funded Regional Centers for Health Workforce Studies considered “incumbents” for this opportunity?

A: There are no “incumbents” for this or any other competitive funding opportunity. HRSA prides itself on ensuring there is a level playing field for all applicants by publishing competitive announcements and providing a technical assistance forum for all potential applicants. A committee of experts qualified by training and experience in the particular fields or disciplines related to the HWRC program will perform an objective, independent peer review of each eligible application submitted.

Technical Questions/Application Details

Q: Can applicants submit multiple applications? May these applications cover for multiple concentration areas for research HWRCs?

A: Yes, applicants may submit multiple applications, including for multiple applications to serve as a research HWRC. However, an applicant can only receive a maximum of two funded awards – one for research technical assistance. No recipient will receive multiple awards to serve as research HWRCs in multiple concentration areas.

Q: Do sub-awards from awardees to entities that may also be receiving HWRC funds violate the “one award” rule specified in the FOA?

A: As a funding entity, HRSA will make only one award per institution. Sub-awards from grantees to either research entities or individual researchers who also receive direct HWRC funds do not violate the one award rule.

Q: The instructions on page 19 specify that the staff loading chart be included as Attachment 1. Instructions on page 15 and page 27 specify that staffing plan and job descriptions are included in Attachment 2. Which is right?

A: The instructions on pages 15 and 27 are correct: the staffing plan and job descriptions should be included in Attachment 2. Attachment 1 is reserved for any tables or charts necessary to the application, if applicable.

Q: If each research project will require its own methodology, what does the “Methodology” section of the application intend to cover?

A: The “Methodology” section of the application should describe the HWRC’s general approach based on its expertise (including in research methods) and focus. Each proposed project should also include detail regarding its methodology in order to meet the review criteria for this announcement, which will assess whether research proposals are methodologically sound and appropriate to each project’s hypothesis.

Q: What are the HWRC’s requirements for a web presence? May the HWRC leverage existing online vehicles?

A: HRSA expects that each HWRC will have a distinct web presence independent from any existing online vehicles.

Q: What is meant by the short-turnaround requests referenced on page 22 of the application?

A: Applicants should be prepared to assist BHP with policy issues or questions that emerge over the course of their funding. These requests may require customized qualitative or quantitative analysis relevant to the HWRC’s areas of expertise, including the funded area of concentration in the case of a research HWRC. Proposed staffing should account for time to respond to these requests (up to five percent of staffing hours), which will be limited to four per year.

Q: Should the application address all four years of the cooperative agreement, or only the first year?

A: The FOA requires that the applicant provide a work plan and budget covering the entire project period. However, the applicant need only provide detailed proposals for research projects or TA initiatives in the first budget year.

Selecting Research/TA Projects

Q: Is it appropriate for an applicant to propose longer term projects that will take more than one year to conclude?

A: This FOA requires that the HWRC produce four policy briefs per year. There is no restriction on creating a theme across the HWRC’s portfolio; however, the applicant must ensure that there are four separable products produced in each budget year in order to meet the requirements of the FOA.

Q: Is there a preference for primary vs. secondary data?

A: No. However, applicants should ensure that all proposed projects are feasible to be completed within a single budget year.

Consortia and Related

Q: What are the restrictions around creating a consortium? What is meant by a “pass through” for funds?

A: Consortium arrangements are allowable under this FOA. However, HWRCs must represent collaborative groups of staff that work together on research projects or TA initiatives rather than a

collection of loosely affiliated individual researchers. The proposed consortium structure must demonstrate a cohesive identity into and of itself. In addition, the consortium must have a primary entity responsible for research, supervision, administrative activities, and overall management of Federal grant funds. Each member of any proposed consortium must independently meet the eligibility requirements of the opportunity.

Q: If a consortium is proposed, do the PI and Deputy PI have to come from the same organization?

A: Applicants are free to propose a staffing structure that covers multiple entities, including proposing that HWRC leaders come from different institutions, assuming the baseline requirements for a consortium as listed above are met.

Expert Work Group

Q: What type of expenses may the Expert Work Group budget include? Are honoraria allowable?

A: Applicants proposing an Expert Work Group as one component of their application should budget for the cost of this Work Group, including any costs associated with convening the group. Expert Work Group honoraria are allowable costs for this opportunity and, if applicable, should be listed under the Consultant budget line item with a description included in the budget narrative justification. Additional questions about the specific costs allowable under this budget item should be directed to the attention of Bruce Holmes, Senior Grants Management Specialist, at 301-443-0752 or Bholmes@hrsa.gov.

Q: What criteria should an applicant use to determine who is appropriate to serve on an Expert Work Group?

A: Applicants should ensure that proposed Expert Work Group members meet the criteria outlined in the FOA at page 24; specifically, they should ensure that the proposed individuals are not staff members at the applicant organization and that the individuals are willing and able to discharge the duties of an Expert Work Group member. In addition, applicants should be careful to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Post-Award and Related

Q: What happens to the policy briefs once they are received?

A: Once policy briefs are submitted to the funder, they will undergo a collaborative editing process co-managed by BHPr and the recipient. The ultimate intent is for the briefs to be published on both BHPr's website and the HWRC's website.

For additional questions or any other clarification, please contact the Project Officer, Margaret Glos, at 301-443-3579 or email mglos@hrsa.gov